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No. 8
Amenorthaca

Robt. E. Boulton

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Chas. C. Smith

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Amenorrhoea

Before entering into a disquisition of the subject which is the object of the following pages it may not be amiss to make some observations respecting Menstruation in its healthy state, Amenorrhoea being only a departure from this healthy condition of the Menstrues.

By Menstruation or a flow of the Catamenia is meant a periodical discharge of a fluid from the Uterus resembling arterial blood.

There has been much discussion amongst Physiologists relative to the nature of this discharge, its origin et cetera.

By some it is contended to be arterial, by others venous.

Vesalius for instance said it was Venous, and Ruysch on the contrary that it was Arterial.

Introduction.

The first of the principles of the natural sciences is that the universe is a system of causes and effects. The second is that the laws of nature are constant and unchangeable. The third is that the human mind is capable of discovering the laws of nature. The fourth is that the human mind is capable of applying the laws of nature to the human condition. The fifth is that the human mind is capable of improving the human condition. The sixth is that the human mind is capable of creating a better world. The seventh is that the human mind is capable of achieving the highest good. The eighth is that the human mind is capable of attaining the highest knowledge. The ninth is that the human mind is capable of reaching the highest truth. The tenth is that the human mind is capable of attaining the highest happiness. The eleventh is that the human mind is capable of achieving the highest peace. The twelfth is that the human mind is capable of attaining the highest harmony. 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I am disposed to adopt the latter of these opinions, and indeed I believe it to be the opinion most generally entertained on this subject at the present day.

It has also been a point much controverted whether this discharge proceeded from the Vagina, or Uterus.

Doctor Hunter it appears deserves the credit of having discovered its real origin the Uterus. In proof of its origin in the Uterus, women cease to menstruate during pregnancy, which would have no effect on it, if it came from the Vagina.

But on the other hand it has been urged that some women do menstruate during pregnancy, some only in the early months, but others during the whole period.

This at first sight might appear a difficulty not easily gotten over. It may however be accounted for in this way.

During the first months of pregnancy

only a small portion of the Uterus is occupied by the Foetus, of course there is still a considerable secreting surface, and in the latter months when the Uterus is more completely occupied by the Foetus, may we not reasonably suppose that a small portion of the Vagina may be covered by a secreting membrane from which this discharge may still proceed?

The fluid discharged was long thought to be more blood differing only in viscosity. It certainly is not a hamorrhage, for if it was it would coagulate, and that it does not is a point conceded I believe by all.

The celebrated John Hunter was perhaps the first who took notice publicly of this fact, at least in Great Britain.

He observed, that "the blood discharged in Menstruation, is neither similar to blood taken from a vein of the same person, nor to that extravasated by an accident in any

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"other part of the body, but is a species of blood
"changed, separated, or thrown off from the
"common mass, by an action of the vessels
"of the uterus, in a process similar to secretion,
"by which action the blood having lost its
"living principle, it does not so easily coagulate."

The blood then may be deprived of this power
of coagulation by several causes, as by light-
ning, some kinds of small pox &c. But of this
I have no certain knowledge.

The time at which this discharge makes
its appearance may be varied by several causes,
as the climate, state of the health &c. &c.

In Lapland, for instance, according to Linnæus
women only menstruate during the summer
months. In our own climate the commencement
of menstruation is usually from fourteen
to sixteen years of age; tho occasionally it
may take place a little earlier.

In very warm climates we have accounts of

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girls menstruating at eight, and in those it is not an uncommon thing for a woman to become a mother at nine or ten yrs of age.

As to the quantity discharged, it may be called *puer*, generally at from ℥iv to ℥vi .

Hippocrates says ℥xx that this is certainly too large a quantity, and should be considered more as an hemorrhage than as a real discharge of the *catamenia*.

It is indeed a difficult matter to ascertain the precise quantity, as most females from motives of delicacy are disposed to conceal it.

If however, as I have just observed more than ℥vi are discharged it should be considered as an hemorrhage.

This discharge usually continues from five to seven days, sometimes not more than three, and in some cases even nine or ten. If it were more rapid it would be attended with

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very great inconvenience and the unhappy female would be liable to have her delicacy wounded by many unforeseen accidents.

When women arrive at from forty five to fifty the discharge becomes irregular frequently ceasing for three or four months and then becoming excessive. This is an important era in their lives, for if there be a disposition to cancer, &c. it now makes its appearance.

Notwithstanding as before mentioned the most common period of the cessation of the menses is from forty five to fifty, yet there are cases mentioned of women menstruating at sixty, seventy, and at eighty and there is a case related by Doct. Brewster of one who had this discharge at the age of one hundred and six. Such cases therefore are to be considered as exceptions to a general rule.

Having now briefly spoken of the

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nature of the Menstrual discharge, its term
of continuance, with a few of the most
^{common} symptoms attending it, I shall
proceed to a consideration of some of the the-
ories that have been advanced relative to
its causes &c. &c.

It was anciently believed
and is by some even at the present day sup-
posed to be under lunar influence. But was
this the case then all women should men-
struate at the same time; whereas we know
that this discharge takes place at any
time of the month totally regardless of
the moon's phases. This however continued
to be the belief till the time of Galen;
he adopted the theory of plethora. He
argued that women take generally a more
delicate frame and much less exercise, cons-
equently that it was necessary there should
be some way of freeing the system of this sup-

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excesses of blood necessarily generated, and
that the uterus performed this office. But
that it is not dependent on plethora may
be easily proven, for if there be plethora in
those cases it must be caused by four or six
ounces of blood, and the loss of that quantity
from any part of the system ought to be equally
as effectual in relieving it. But this we
know not to be the case, for if twenty, thirty,
or I might say, forty $\frac{3}{4}$ are taken it does not
interrupt the discharge. Women also occasion-
ally have venous hæmorrhages from other
parts of the body, as the nose, lungs &c. without
affecting menstruation in the slightest degree.
Again, we find that women of weak and
sensitive constitutions menstruate as copiously
as those of a plethoric habit.

Those objecting against general ple-
thora ^{as the cause}, convince us better that it was erro-
neous, and he put it down local plethora.

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He believes that the vessels of the uterus become distended with blood and were consequently forced to discharge it. But Morgagni, who was an accurate observer and who attended particularly to this subject, could not discover any distentions. The we should be led rationally to suppose there must be some thing, essence of the vessels, as this would be necessary, to supply the blood from which the Catamenial fluid is secreted.

The first objection to this theory is that it considers menstruation as a mere hemorrhage and farther it could only account for the first discharge. I would then ask what produces the second discharge?

Then Cullen acknowledges himself at a loss and was compelled to resort to the force of habit, as an explanation. This tho is totally insufficient. The influence of habit could not be so soon established, nor could it be

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sufficient to produce even the third discharge. This theory must therefore be looked upon as very defective.

But supposing habit to produce the second and all succeeding discharges, its power is sometimes very much diminished, and occasionally totally destroyed by interruption. Would not pregnancy and suckling which, sul a stop laid for twenty two months be a period sufficient to break the force of habit? In my opinion it certainly would. This theory then we also discard.

Chemistry next offered its aid in this obscure and difficult subject. Here too it was totally defective. It attributed the discharge to a fermentation in the blood which was said to be produced by the venereal disease. This was too absurd to last long and of course was soon discarded.

It ^{thought} by some that certain emotions of the

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mind may have an effect in producing this discharge Doct^r Clark of London mentions the case of a Lady who never had menstruated but there was in the system a disposition to this evacuation, when hearing suddenly of the return of her husband from a voyage, the discharge was not actually induced yet he supposes from this intelligence his disposition farther increased, and she conceived, notwithstanding the catamenia did not make their appearance; in this case the Doct^r thinks the disposition equivalent to the act itself. We readily admit that certain operations of the mind have a powerfull effect on the whole system, & a proof of which I will mention a case of a young Lady labouring under Amenorrhœa who (after all the usual remedies had proved abortive) was sent to the sea shore for the benefit of flow.

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thing; and on lifting a rail to knock down
some fruit, she was very much alarmed at
the sight of a large snake which lay
under it and immediately menstruated.
After this she had her regular periods.

To these emotions then let us ascribe
the efforts and not to the grossness of
sexual enjoyment.

I might still choose
to mention some other theories that have
been entertained relative to the nature,
and causes, of this discharge, but as such
no claims to originality, should deem it an
unnecessary assumption of time; there-
fore shall only farther remark, that not-
withstanding the diversity of opinion on
the subject still most are agreed that
without this discharge having taken
place no woman can become pregnant.
All therefore that can be said on the

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subject is but little more than a statement
of probabilities founded on conjecture and
hypothesis.

Irregularities of the Menstrual
discharge I believe to be the most common sources of those
diseases to which females are particularly liable
and which for many reasons call for the particular
attention and skill of the practitioners. All
irregularities of the Catamenia may be com-
bined under the terms Retention, Suppression,
excessiveness, and deficient, and painful menstruation.
But I shall confine myself to the two first of them
Viz. Retention and Suppression both of which are
comprehended under the term

Amenorrhoea

By which we are to understand a
partial or total obstruction of the Menstruum women
arising from other causes than pregnancy, suckling
and old age. Doct. Cullen in his classification
of diseases places this genus in the class Locales,

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Menstruation as I have before observed, is a secretory secretion of the Uterus and not blood. By this view of the subject we have an explanation of Menstrual cramps of Quercy, &c., and of course we have to consider Amenorrhoea an interruption of the secretory action of the Uterus, and that the remedies which remove this, act so as to restore the healthy condition of the Uterus, on the precise condition of which the secretions depends. Notwithstanding I have previously stated that the Catamenia usually make their appearance between the age of fourteen, and sixteen, yet occasionally we have astonishing precocity, on the organs of a woman appearing to be developed at the age of twelve or thirteen. At this is not looked upon as disease so a retardation two or three years, provided every thing else be proper and regular, cannot be called a disease.

The Uterus and ovaria must have arrived at certain state of perfection before this discharge

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can take place, and in some it may require a few
years longer than in others, to arrive at this state.

When a woman in this country arrives at the age of
eighteen without having menstruated she generally becomes
uneasy, and often a Physician is consulted. If in such
cases she is not in good general health we may prescribe
exercise, particularly on horseback, with some tonic.

If however there be nothing the matter but retention
it is unnecessary to resort to medicines. The same
times by way of complying with the solicitations
of her patient, or her friends, we are compelled to
make use of some remedy, in these cases a very good
prescription is bread pills composed with a little
Rhubarb. But this arises from the faith of the
patient in her physician these pills may afford
an agreeable stimulus to the mind, and in this
way we gain time, nature effects the cure and
the Physician gets the credit.

If on the contrary there be general disease it
must be treated without any regard to the Retention.

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We cannot develop the uterus therefore must wait till it is stimulated into action by the Ovaries. When a gentle stimulus is necessary in all cases of Stoolic medicines are very good. The Aether or compound Rehoul will should be freely employed.

But in this case all other complaints we must first learn the exact condition of the system and apply them accordingly.

Under certain conditions of the system the administration of Tonics, particularly the preparations of Iron, prove beneficial, such as Chalybeate waters, tincture of Murialox Iron, or the Carbonas ferri combined with Myrrh. When we discover symptoms of menstruation as pains in the back, extending down the thighs &c we may then assist.

Madder at this time is highly recommended particularly by Doct^r Givens of this City. The dose is from ʒss to ʒj twice or three times a day.

The tincture of Guaiac is also very good.

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but is too stimulating to be used first. If there be activity in the spleen we always draw blood before its exhibition. We are situated under various states of the bowels.

Besides this general ~~remedial~~ plan of treatment, it has been also proposed to excite more directly the Morive action by marriage; and the use of certain Emenagogues. With respect to the latter part of the proposal, I am of opinion that, if not judiciously employed they will do harm, and they do not, generally succeed without the use of such measures as tend to improve the general system. If intention should be accompanied with a plethoric state, the best plan is to use purgatives regularly, in a degree proportioned to their effect on the system, and make the patient take as much exercise as she can without producing fatigue. If however we should not succeed in curing the disease by this general plan of treatment we must then resort to the use of certain articles

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known by the name of *Vincetoxicum*. The first
of which I shall mention is the *Allyala Sengra*.

This under certain conditions of the system
is looked upon as one of the best articles. The form
in which it is usually exhibited is either the powder
root, or in decoction, but the saturated decoction
is generally preferred. If it excite nausea, which
it is apt to do in a large quantity we then com-
bine aromatics with it, as orange peel, cinnamon
&c. &c. The usual dose is from three to ξss
in the twenty four hours, but when the most
effort is at hand and until the discharge is in-
duced we should urge it as far as possible without
causing its rejection. In the interval we are
advised to lay it aside for a week or two, without
this precaution, if the medicine does not lessen its
effect it is apt to become exceedingly nauseous
and disgusting to the patient. During its exhi-
bition the system is to be kept well regulated.
Respecting this article, I shall only farther

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remark that I suspect, it may be used in almost all forms of Amenorrhoea, if in prescribing it, a proper regard be had to the condition of the system.

The Savin is also an article which has been used with some advantage as an emmenagogue. It was employed half a century ago by Dr. Thomas Sydenham in a large & its use, and the confidence in the remedy was once very much injured, but it is lately revived and used with much benefit in some weak forms of Amenorrhoea. The dose is \mathcal{R} or \mathcal{XX} grs three or four times a day.

Woad as I before stated has been used as an emmenagogue, and not without some success. It has been tried, it is said of some injurious qualities and hence rejected it: but by other Authors it has been highly extolled, particularly by the late Doct^r Barton.

There are several other articles which are recommended as emmenagogues, such as Cantharides, the common Rosemary, Phosphorus &c.

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but in the exhibition of the latter of these articles
the greatest caution is necessary it being a most
powerfull remedy. Even in the dose of $\frac{1}{2}$ of a
grain, it is said to produce a universal glow
and excitement, and when properly regulated
is ^{to} some supposed to be a very important article,
and as possessing a more direct tendency to the
organs of generation than almost any other
article of the Materia Medica.

Next I have only spoken of those medicines suited
to cases where extreme atony and debility exist;
for frequently a more relaxation exists requiring
for its cure a set of remedies more permanent
but less violent in their action than the above.
I allude to Tonic's.

They are not properly Emenagogues
being only so in as much as they restore the tone
of the Uterus. The Tonics most usually resor-
ted to are some of the preparations of Iron;
there are eximia list, and their exhibition

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should be accompanied by the use of the cold
bath, exercise, friction, change of air, a gene-
rals diet &c &c. As amongst the best and
most common of the Chalybeate Expositions,
I shall mention the Limature ferri in the
dose of from $\text{ʒ} \text{ss}$ to $\text{ʒ} \text{ss}$ and the Carbonaceous
in doses of from $\text{ʒ} \text{ss}$ to $\text{ʒ} \text{ss}$ several times
a day; the latter of these however, being unplea-
sant in the form, is scarcely ever given so; but
combined with Peppermint, ginger, or some
aromatic. The following formula is recom-
mended by Doct^r Whapman as rendering
it more agreeable

$\text{ʒ} \text{ss}$ Rust of Iron $\text{ʒ} \text{ss}$

Pepp. Bark. $\text{ʒ} \text{ss}$

Pepp & Ginger $\text{ʒ} \text{ss}$ Syrup, q. s. to make

into an Electuary to be given pro re nata.

But there is still a rather mode of exhibiting
it; in the form of Chalybeate wine. Agreeing
also with the last prescription is the following

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Rx Must of Iron &c

" Gentian.... &c

Orange peel... &c Put into a bottle of
Port wine, expose to a moderate heat for two days
and decant for use.

It is the practice with some to unite lactics
gums with chalybeates; as Asafoetida, Muck,
Castor, &c. My own conviction however
is that there is little good to be derived from
them as emmenagogues; tho they may prove bene-
ficial in relieving Hysteria connected with
Amenorrhoea.

In addition to what I have said in
my Dissertation and here in a manner relative
to the treatment necessary to this form of the
disease; I shall only add that unless the bowels
be kept well regulated, and a corresponding
attention be paid to the Arterial system, all
our remedies will at last prove inefficient
and unavailing. I prefer however discharging

[Faint, illegible handwriting on the left page]

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the subject entirely, permit me to state a few observations on Suppression of the Catamenia, but having anticipated much relative to the treatment of this form of the disease in my preceding remarks, the treatment necessary to both being very similar, it only remains that I make a few observations and I shall have done.

Suppression of the Menses may be produced by a variety of causes, such as violent agitations of the mind, cold applied to the surface of the body, or even cold substances taken into the stomach, are said to produce the same effect. But when it is a consequence of some chronic and obstinate disease, such as Puerperal Fever, &c. &c., it would be both useless and hurtful to attempt, by stimulating drugs to restore it. But in those cases where fear, or some other cause, inducing debility of the frame, it is proper to interfere, both as the Suppression is a source of anxiety to the patient, and also as the

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natural means of restoration tend to amend the
general system. It is proper in our curative plan
to admit that Suppression may take place
under different circumstances of the constitution.
It may occur with a debilitated, Phlogistic condi-
tion, in which case we are to proceed much in
the same way as in Retention; and along with
the tonic plan of treatment, it will be pro-
per to have recourse to the use of Emmenagogue,
such as Sassa, Hellébore, Marsh. Madder &c.

About the time the Catamenia are ex-
pected to make their appearance we may de-
rive great benefit from the exhibition of
an Emetic, accompanied with the use of the
warm bath, leucostemum or pedicularium.

But in Suppression, as in Retention we are to
be governed very much by the state of the pulse.
Should the pulse be strong, we detract slowly, fully
the in some instances the pulse is rather weak to bear
this evacuation, yet where is too much action, to rise

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stimulants in such cases we may exhibit. Adding
the use of ss two or three times a day. If however
this does not succeed and we wish something more
stimulating we may then resort to the use of the Vol.
Tinct of Guaiac. The following formula is highly
recommended by Doct^r DuRoi

R Gum Guaiac ℥viii

Car. mate of Soda ℥iii

Alc. Sicc. ℥i

Acid. ℥vi Mij

To be given in the dose of ss twice or three times
a day. This prescription the Dr. says has never
failed in his hands of effecting a cure in cases
in which it was proper to use it.

The Black Thistle as I have previously
stated is considered a valuable article in the
region of the Patagonias, this appears to be
a remedy of ancient date, and was for a while au-
thoritatively laid aside, as being less efficacious than
some others; but its reputation has been lately

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resides in this Country and in Europe: and in
this City is by some of the ablest Physicians thought
to be one of the best Emmenagogues. Dr. Sydenham is one
of its most sanguine advocates: he says he scarcely
ever commences the cure of Amenorrhoea without
the use of the Black Hellebore. It is given either
in the form of Tinct, or the powd & leaves. The dose
of the powder is viii or xx grs, of the Tinct, from
 xxv to xxx fts.

In addition to what I have said of these medicines
best suited to the cure of Amenorrhoea their mode
of exhibition, and the numerous circumstances
necessary to be attended to in the treatment
of this very distressing complaint, I shall only
add two others: Blisters and a Salivation, the
latter of which however is only resorted to in
extreme in extreme cases; and by the Practitioner
is considered a dernier resource, or the *Ultima
ratio medicorum*.

Having thus delivered my observations

relative to the nature, and cure of Anemorrhoea,
in as concise a manner as my time, and the
limited experience which I have had on the
subject would admit, I shall now close this paper.
But to do this without an acknowledgment to
the several Medical Professors of this Univer-
sity, would be a breach of that duty which
my feelings claim.

To you therefore Gentlemen; at least this
small tribute of my esteem is due. Permit me
then to present you with the sincere acknow-
ledgments of a pupil, for the many opportu-
nities of improvement your Lectures have affor-
ded him.

With the assurance of my best wishes,
that you may continue to enjoy all the plea-
sure of success in the Science of Medicine,
I now bid you,

Adieu.

